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For Immediate Release: August 23, 2011

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U.S. EPA settles with Kettleman City hazardous waste landfill for \$1 million for improperly managing waste

Chemical Waste Management required to make significant improvements to its facility

SAN FRANCISCO – Today, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency announced a settlement with Chemical Waste Management requiring the company to pay a \$400,000 fine and spend an estimated \$600,000 to comply with environmental laws after the facility failed to properly manage waste at its landfill near Kettleman City, Calif.

Amid concerns that the company's Kettleman Hills facility, located about 3½ miles to the southwest of Kettleman City, posed a threat to the community, EPA began an intensive investigation of the landfill more than a year ago to ensure the facility was complying with all state and federal hazardous waste requirements.

"We made a commitment to the citizens of Kettleman City to look closely at this landfill to ensure it was complying with our laws, and today is the culmination," said Jared Blumenfeld, EPA's Regional Administrator for the Pacific Southwest. "Chemical Waste Management is required to operate its hazardous waste facility in a way that protects human health and the environment -- and it's our job to aggressively enforce the terms of its permit."

Today's settlement is a result of a joint EPA and California Department of Toxic Substances Control investigation in February 2010 that discovered through the landfill's records that the facility's laboratory had not been following proper quality control procedures since 2005. EPA made a preliminary recommendation that the company switch to using an outside laboratory, which it has done since May 2010. The investigation found records indicating the facility disposed of waste that did not fully meet standards for treatment prior to disposal. In addition, the facility disposed of hazardous waste leachate from the landfill without assuring the leachate met treatment standards.

There is no evidence to suggest that the landfill's violations posed any danger to nearby communities or workers at the facility.

[Under the terms of the settlement](#), the facility must use an outside laboratory for a minimum of two years to verify that its hazardous wastes meet treatment standards prior to disposal. The facility is required to install an advanced record management system, and purchase new equipment before it is allowed to perform all analyses in its own laboratory. It must also make physical and operational changes in its leachate management system. EPA will continue to vigorously monitor each of the improvements outlined in the settlement.

As part of EPA's oversight, the agency also investigated potential impacts on the community from polychlorinated biphenyls, or PCBs. At EPA's request, Chemical Waste Management conducted a highly detailed study of carcinogenic PCB congeners and potential off-site impacts. This was the first scientific

study of this magnitude and cost at a PCB disposal facility. The [results](#), released in January 2011, showed there was no evidence that PCBs from facility operations migrate offsite at concentrations that adversely affect the health of local residents or the environment. EPA also conducted an air sampling study, and in February 2011 released a [report](#) documenting that the facility's waste ponds were not significant sources of harmful emissions.

In a separate action in November 2010, [EPA levied a \\$300,000 fine](#) against the company for failing to properly manage PCBs within the facility.

The Chemical Waste Management Kettleman Hills facility is a commercial hazardous waste facility located in Kings County, Calif. The facility handles the treatment, storage and disposal of hazardous waste, PCBs, and non-hazardous waste.

The EPA regulates hazardous waste under authority of the [Resource Conservation and Recovery Act](#), and PCBs under authority of the [Toxic Substance Control Act](#).

For more information, please visit: <http://www.epa.gov/region9/kettleman>

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